



CELLULITIS

Cellulitis is a skin infection. It is usually caused by bacteria, and commonly affects the lower legs.



What does it feel like?

Your skin may be **red, hot, swollen** and **painful**. You may have a **fever, feel tired and unwell**.



What can I do to feel better?

Paracetamol or ibuprofen may help your discomfort. Resting and **elevating the affected area is important** to help reduce pain and swelling. Moisturising dry skin and treating fungal infections can help reduce the risk of developing cellulitis in the future.



Will antibiotics help?

Antibiotics are likely to be needed to treat the infection.



What should I expect?

Your fever should start to settle and you should feel better after starting antibiotics. However, it is very common that the area of redness of the skin will increase for a few days. This does not mean the treatment isn't working. The redness may take weeks to completely resolve.



Do I need to see a doctor?

Yes. Your doctor will need to assess you to confirm you have cellulitis and prescribe antibiotics. You may need to see your doctor to monitor your progress. See your doctor immediately if you feel much worse (including chills, shaking or a high temperature) or if you develop **severe pain**.

This information sheet was developed by the National Centre for Antimicrobial Stewardship and the University of Melbourne. Information sheets on other common infections can be found at <https://www.ncas-australia.org/community-information-sheets>.

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